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SHERMAN, FRENCH & COMPANY
BOSTON

VOICES AND VISIONS

VOICES AND VISIONS

BY

CLINTON SCOLLARD

FULL DARK SHALL BE THE DAYS IN STORE
WHEN VOICE AND VISION COME NO MORE !

ALDRICH

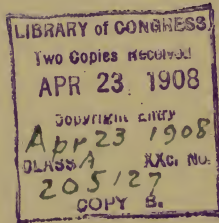


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Published April 1908



PS 2792
.V6
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*A*RE you a lover? Come! —
A lover of wilding things! —
The bee's low, haunting hum,
The skyward whirring of wings;

Murmurs of reed and rush
To the rill adventuring by;
Out of the underbrush
The cuckoo's shifting cry;

Bruiséd sassafras scent;
The sweet-flag's tonic taste;
The wind's cool instrument
Wholly assoiled of haste!

I would take your hand
And lead you into the wild;
There we should understand,
Each like a little child.

And the loving mother-earth,
Wise to the depths of her loam,
She should cry out with mirth,
"Here are my babes come home!"

OF LIFE AND NATURE

THE CALL

O'ER violet-dotted height and king-cup hollow
The Spirit calls me, and I fain would follow.
Old crabbed, creeping Age,
With its warped heritage,
Have I forsworn,
Clasping again the ardors of the morn.
I need no staff;
'Tis prop enough to hear the rushes laugh,
And see
The frolic of the leaves upon the tree
What'er it be,—
Or gracile elm or supple hickory!
I am aware all nature feels with me
The impulse of the call;
The vine upon the wall
Raptures and thrills to every tendril tip,
And cherry chalices, sweetly virginal,
Pulse to the very lip.
Yellow and red and rimpling russet throat
Have caught the mandate note,
And, while I hearken,
From birchen coppices that greenly darken
'Tis fluted with ecstatic variation;
And lo, the fleet elation
Kindles along the swale-lands where unfold
The torches of the bright marsh-marigold!

The trilliums ethereal trumpets blow —

What ho! what ho!

Below,

Even the tiny creepers of the sod

Have listened and responded;

Wry-rooted mandrakes beck and nod;

The ferns are freshly fronded;

Agile ephemeræ, winged with fluttering gauze,

Tingle and tremble,

Circle afar, up-dart and re-assemble

As though in key with earth's melodious laws.

Over the pebble

The rhythmic water tinkles with new treble;

Swift-fluttering psyche, as in keen delight,

Beguiles the fancy with strange loops of flight;

The shy moth apprehends in the lush shade;

The mosses shimmer with a livelier luster;

Mushrooms upleap in sudden creamy cluster,

And lichens shine, in silvery gloss arrayed.

O fragrant fires

Sprinkled with vernal incense! O desires

Renascent, with your billowy resurgence,

Your all-imperious urgency,

You teach me how the soul of man aspires!

Spirit, like Truth,

Keeps its eternal youth,

And quickeneth me until I fain would follow

O'er violet-dotted height and king-cup hollow!

THE DRUM

ROLL! *roll!*

'Tis a sound that thrills sheer to the soul;
When I hear it,
It is not to fear it,
But rather to cheer it!
Now plangent, now pleading;
Receding,
Or swelling
Sonorous, and telling,
With ominous rattle,
Of battle.

Lo, squadrons are forming
For storming!

Roll! roll!

Not the shrill of the fife,
Insistent with glorious life,
Can clutch at the spirit, control,
Like that dominant throbbing. Away
They have plunged to the fray
With the light of emprise
In their eyes.

Roll! roll!

What leads over valley and slope

Through the roar and the hum?

'Tis the voicing of Hope,—

'Tis the drum!

Hark! piercing through darkness and dole,

Inspiring to valor

White pallor,

It carries the crest to the gates

Where red sacrifice waits,—

Waits with its chrism for the soul!

Roll! roll!

I WALK DARKLY

I WALK darkly down the day,
Sanguine, and yet never sure
If the noon's abundant ray
In its brightness shall endure;
Brooding calm or crying storm,
Sunrise glory, sunset splendor,
Beauty in each shifting form,
Grave or tender,—
Through them, time of frost or flower,
Conscious every orbèd hour,
I walk darkly.

I walk darkly down the night,
Slave to marvel, questioning
If the moon's ethereal light
Be not some dream-built thing;
Under star on swirling star,
Meteor dust and comet's fire,
Vaults of purple faint and far
Where expire
Tiny wavering flecks of flame,
Atom-points without a name,
I walk darkly.

I walk darkly ; peace or stress,
Crest of joy or depth of woe,
I may grope and I may guess,
Fancy, and yet never know.
Just the husk of truth I grip,—
Heapèd wisdom of the ages,
Learning's mightiest fellowship,
Saints and sages,—
In despite of each and all,
What am I but folly's thrall
Who walk darkly?

THE GUESTS

BUILDED upon a most mysterious plan,
There is an inn we call The Heart of Man.
And through the door thereof as through a glass
I saw guests pass,
A troop strange-garmented.
Big-browed Ambition led,
With brightly glistening bays about the head;
Then, with mild eyes aflame,
And lips a-smile, Love came,
Bearing white violets and rosemary;
And next pale Pity went,
Her hollow cheeks besprent
With the pearl-precious tears of sympathy;
Like to a buoyant boy
Leaped Joy,
Whom after Grief
Crept like the palsied leaf
The winds of autumn whirl amid the dust;
Then glooming Hate and Lust;
And, with averted eye,
Hypocrisy.

“Strange comradeship!” unto my soul I said,
And my soul answerèd,
“Think what his lot must be
Who entertains this motley company!”

ONE DAY IN MAY

DO you recall, old friend, how we
Pulled up the Wye one day in May?
The bloom was on the hawthorn tree,
And many an upland meadow way
Showed plots of hyacinths as blue
As glints of sky the clouds let through.

We left gray Chepstow's walls behind,—
Its crumbling keep, its burst of chimes;
With us went wooingly the wind,
Repeating little liquid rhymes;
And with us, too, the tide's long sweep
From Severn and the outer deep.

Spring's choristers from either shore
Flung us their softly silvery hail;
Each time we raised or dipped the oar,
Lo, the sweet burden of a tale
As ancient as the hills, and keyed
To match our spirits' vernal need!

The heights slipped by; the lowlands swung
Like wingèd dreams athwart our ken;
Thatched farmsteads where the ivy clung
Swam in the westering light, and then,
Beyond lush tree and lichenèd stile,
Loomed Tintern's dim monastic pile.

We shipped the oars and stepped to land;
Sauntered the village streets, and clomb
Wide loops of path until we scanned
The valley,— water, wood and loam
Umber beneath the plowman's blade,
Or in faint gold and green arrayed.

Into a hill gap drooped the sun,
Flooding divinely, ere it went,
The abbey windows one by one
With an ethereal ravishment,—
Ambers and crimsons such as play
About the funeral pyre of day.

Then twilight's purples, and her peace,
And the calm lifting of the moon!
O Memory, may'st thou never cease
To grant to me this gracious boon,—
The vision of that bygone time
When May and youth were both at prime!

CHILDREN OF ROMANCE

IN MEMORY OF

JAMES FENIMORE COOPER

(COOPERSTOWN, NEW YORK, AUGUST 8, 1907)

WHERE round Hellenic headlands the blue
seas

Sweep with melodious beat Romance was born,
Within her eyes the untrammelled harmonies
And ardors of the morn.

Her impulses are glad as those that run
At nesting-time from wing to shimmering wing,
That mount from root to bough-top when the sun
Loosens the sap in spring.

And since her radiant birth-hour long ago
She hath bequeathed her ichor and her zest,—
Kindling her virile children with the glow
From her impassioned breast.

She was the soul of Chivalry; when night,—
Those purblind ages, sanguine and obscure,—
Oppressed mankind, hers was the torch to light
Trouvère and Troubadour.

She was to Marlowe an inspiring ray;
No vital charm from Shakespere she concealed;
She walked with Sidney through that last red day
On Zutphen's fatal field.

She was a voice heroic, eloquent,
With many a virginal and varied chord,
The gamut of a mighty instrument,
To him of Abbotsford.

And unto him we hail and hold our own,
Our Pioneer, for whom green laurels be,
She spake in accents of primeval tone
From forest and from sea.

Ope but the record of his storied page
And learn how loyally he worshiped her!
Through him we gain a precious heritage,—
A new interpreter.

Soon will the redman rest beneath the mold,
Naught but a name, a vision-vanished race;
And yet through Cooper's genius will he hold
An unforgotten place.

.

But yesterday at twilight-time I strayed,
And heard the wood-thrush chant its evening mass
From out the inter-braiding boughs that shade
The shores of Glimmer-Glass.

Cleaving the distance on its vibrant course,
Silvered the soft insistence of a bell,
And o'er the Susquehanna's tranquil source
The velvet shadows fell;

They gathered where the great Romancer slept —
Whose fancy many a form with life imbued —
In that God's Acre where he long has kept
Earth's final quietude.

The hour was fraught with magic, for it brought
Forth from the neighboring aisleways of the pine
Those whom his rapt imagination wrought,
Line upon silent line.

First the immortal woodsman, gun on arm,
Deerslayer — Pathfinder — hero to the last,
The spell of whose incomparable charm
O'er all our hearts is cast.

And those high-natured warriors of the wild,
Father and son, of the undaunted look,—
Belovèd Uncas, knightly forest child,
And noble Chingachgook.

And swarthy seamen, savoring of the surge,
Rovers upon the unconquerable main,
Triumphant, although winds and waters merge,
O'er peril and o'er pain.

And shadowy others,—bravo, patriot, maid,—
From many a land, our own and alien climes;
Dim wraiths! — and yet the figment of a shade
The master's touch sublimes.

Such was the pageant of my vesper dream
While fluctuant starlight round me fireflies threw,
And heavenly starlight gilded with its gleam
Otsego's breadth of blue.

Ah, he may sleep, the magian whose pen
Transfigured out of naught such pulsing lives,
Yet midst the ceaseless moil of mortal men
His spirit still survives!

Here where he dwelt and strove in human guise
Around whose name are quenchless lusters shed,
What lip shall dare, in unbelieving wise,
Declare that he is dead?

In yonder sacred garth his dust may rest,
But that so potent essence which was he
Strides with the sunlight up the mountain crest,
More animate than we.

The lake he loved, the forest paths his feet
In other days were wont to fare along,
Are lush with summer opulence, are sweet
With sunshine and with song.

The air is tinct with attar faint and fine
That morning from the dewy loam distills;
Through it, with what transcendent beauty, shine
His wooded homeland hills!

Here let us leave him, one with mother-earth
That yielded him so pure and rich a store,—
One with her mood of primal grief and mirth
Till time shall be no more!

THERE'S NECROMANCY STILL

THERE'S necromancy still!
The rathe marsh-marigold
An Ophir makes of yonder oozy mold;
Slim branches erewhile stark and dark and chill,—
The wild wayfaring-tree,—
(Oh, wondrous wizardry!)
Offer a fragrant Hybla where the bee
May drink his greedy fill!
Care must attend whatever path you tread,
Lest your foot crush some fair and fragile head,
Shatter white innocence, leave budding hope
Bruised on the dewy slope.
But yester night
All the wide earth lay barren of delight
That now is splendor-bright before the sight.
And so, my masters, say whatso you will
There's necromancy still!

THE HEART OF THE HILLS

✓
IN the lyric tide of April, in the month of daffodils,
In the gush of the gold of morning I came to the heart of the hills,—
Came by a virgin pathway that the vernal goddess trod
On her singing way from the southland over the sleeping sod.
And a chorus of choiring voices ever anigh me spake,
The tawny throat by the rillside, the red-breast out of the brake,
The pipers hid in the rushes, with their clear “Chee-weep! chee-weep!”
And the fleet wind-children chanting their runes of the upper deep.
A flush of rose and of amber, of sapphire and beryl shade,—
These were the woven glories that the waking morn displayed;
Beauty above and about me! Fluctuant? fading? nay!
Glowing, flowing, and growing in the rising flood of the day!
The soul within me was buoyant, and the spirit in me was one

With the throb of the great earth-passion, with the
thrill of the vital sun.
I felt in my veins the pulsing, I knew in my thews
the power
That stirred in the root of the grasses, that breathed
through the lips of the flower.
If but for the span of a moment I swam in the
aura of flame;
I caught the rapt secret of being clothed by the
Ineffable Name.
And chastened with wonder and strengthened to
meet life's beleaguering ills
I went, like a bondman unfettered, adown from the
heart of the hills.

THE GLORY OF THE SPRING

I HEARD the lyric passion in the night,
And felt my pulses leap as to a tune
Played upon pipes celestial; rapt delight
Mastered wholly, for methought the rune
Wan Winter had been mouthing to the moon
Must cease, and even as I hearkened, lo,
Naught filled the darkness save the overflow
Of life renascent mounting as on wing!
And when dawn set the orient sky aglow,
Behold, behold the glory of the Spring!

In liveries of living emerald dight,
The hilltops hailed each other; dale and dune
Sparkled with spangled splendors, beryl bright;
Above, the heights of heaven seemed to swoon
With hyacinthine hues that presaged June;
Through every copse ran rapture to and fro,
The wood-thrush vying with the vireo;
And Minstrel Rillet touched a silvern string,
And Trouvère South Wind lipped his flute to
blow —
“Behold, behold the glory of the Spring!”

And there were Flora's firstlings, spindrift white,
And amber ardent as the rays of noon,
Thronging the woods as for some fairy rite
With branches waving a fantastic croon; —
The modest violet, its breath a boon
To perfume-lovers; the cupped trillium's snow;
The bright marsh-marigolds in ring or row,
All seeming with ecstatic sense to sing
In virginal and tender tribute "O
Behold, behold the glory of the Spring!"

Prime o' the year, within our hearts we know
Thy benediction after Winter's woe
Is sweeter far than any earthly thing!
Promise unfolds what shining fields to sow!
Behold, behold the glory of the Spring!

A SEA THRALL

THE murmur and the moaning of the sea,
They master me;
I am the serf of sound,
Bondslave to aural beauty grave or gay;
Happy to be so bound,
I hang upon the lyric tides that sway
Night's swimming satellite of ice and fire
Compacted, and although I flee away,
Upon the falcon pinions of desire,
Into the wood's most secret sanctuary,
Or hide amid the mountain's mightiest rocks,
Where, in a mood maniacal, the wind
Mouths like old doddering Lear, and mocks and
mocks
At all of lower earth, I may not find
Escape from those vast fugues that veer and vary
As do the moods and mazes of the mind.
Yea, I am thrall complete
(Finding the thraldom sweet)
To thee, to thee,
O all-embracing and most sovereign sea!

DAFFODIL GOLD

GOLD of the daffodil, drawn
Out of the cup of the dawn,
Gold of the daffodil, born
In the bright mines of the morn,
Gold of the daffodil, spun
On the warm loom of the sun,
Flood through my spirit, and smite
Me with thine orient light!
I that am pallid and poor,
Wasted by winter away,
Be thou my succor and cure!
Quicken my questioning clay!
That I may rouse me and sing,
Touch thou my pulses with spring!

PRIMAVERA

PRIMAVERA! *primavera!*
Thus the golden thrushes call
In cool sallies down the valleys
Where the Umbrian fountains fall.
Ah, the rapture that they capture,—
Wanderers by slope and shore!
Primavera! primavera!
Spring is in the south once more.

Primavera! primavera!
Roses by the Roman wall
Yield the guerdon of the burden
Of an attar magical.
Life's deep measure brimmed with pleasure
Offers nothing to deplore;
Primavera! primavera!
Spring is in the south once more.

Primavera! primavera!
'Tis the heart-refrain of all,
Lord or lowly, base or holy,
Where Calabrian peaks are tall.
Lads and lasses down the passes
Lilt love's olden lyric lore;
Primavera! primavera!
Spring is in the south once more.

THE MILL ON THE YARE

ONE with legend and the past;
Every beam and every board
Touched by the iconoclast
Time, more potent than the sword;
Crumbling, and yet strangely fair,
Stands the old mill on the Yare.

There are vines that love it well,—
Ivy and the clematis;
Droops and dips the foxglove bell
Where the weir's clear margin is;
And the iris leaneth there
By the old mill on the Yare.

Lilting waters all day long
Meet in silvern melody;
While there mounts the plaintive song
Of the throstle in the tree;
And the skylark charms the air
O'er the old mill on the Yare.

Cross the lintel. From the flume
Drones the mill wheel dull and low;
Through the dense and dusty gloom
Plods the miller, grave and slow;
And he seems his years to wear
Like the old mill on the Yare.

Here is patience; here is peace;
Ah, I would my days might run
To the hour of long release
From all toil beneath the sun
Dreamily as they do there
In the old mill on the Yare!

FLIGHT

TELL me where goes
The wraith that was the rose,
Or lily, dight
With delicate delight!

Tell me where flies
The gold of morning skies,
The radiant dream
Hid in the sunset beam;

And I will say
Whither life slips away
Into the dusk,
Leaving an ashen husk!

A CICADA

HERE'S a hail, O brown cicada, tuning
In the golden heat,
O'er the thrush's plaint, the cuckoo's crooning,
Strident and yet sweet!

You bring back the faded dream-creations
Of the days antique;
You inspire the glorious elations
Of the perished Greek!

Not so much the Spartan thought of duty
Held so close to heart,
As the love and worship of pure beauty
Both in song and art!

Strange an insect's shrill half-rhythmic dower
Works such wondrous ends,
Yet association's magic power
Time and space transcends!

Phidian line of frieze; the Sophoclean
Tragic lift and fall;
Pipes Pandean by the old Ægean,—
You revive them all!

MASTER RAIN

STRIDING, striding over the sea,
Calming the rage of the waves goes he,
Lulling the moan of the mighty main,
Assuaging Master Rain!

Marching, marching over the land,
Scattering wide, with a lavish hand,
Draughts for the thirsting seed of the grain,
Bountiful Master Rain!

Never, never a wanderer long;
Ever, ever a-brim with song,—
A plaintive, pleading, pleasuring strain,—
Musical Master Rain!

Welcome thou when the shadows sleep!
Welcome thou when the dreams are deep!
Bearing Peace to Penance and Pain,
Merciful Master Rain!

Old as the host of the hills of earth,
Yet as young as the soul of mirth,
Fain we are of thee, all of us, fain,
Brotherly Master Rain!

A TRAVELER

INTO the dusk and snow
One fared on yesterday;
No man of us may know
By what mysterious way.

He had been comrade long;
We fain would hold him still;
But, though our will be strong,
There is a stronger Will.

Beyond the solemn night
He will find morning-dream,—
The summer's kindling light
Beyond the snow's chill gleam.

The clear, unfaltering eye,
The inalienable soul,
The calm, high energy,—
They will not fail the goal!

Large will be our content
If it be ours to go
One day the path he went
Into the dusk and snow!

MIDSUMMER SONG

DAWNINGS of amber and amethyst eves;
Soft in the south wind the laughter of leaves;
Breath of the poppy and death of the rose,—
Midsummer comes and midsummer goes!

Dapple on cheek of the apple and plum;
Honey-bees droning a die-away hum;
Swales in a shimmer and dales in a doze,—
Midsummer comes and midsummer goes!

Darting of dragon-fly, flutter of moth;
Barley in windrow and wheat in the swath;
Hush-song and thrush-song! — the mother-bird
knows! —
Midsummer comes and midsummer goes!

Moonlight and noonlight all glamour and gleam;
Hillside and rillside a thrall to the dream;
Capture the rapture before the days close! —
Midsummer comes and midsummer goes!

MUSIC

THERE is an organ in my elm,
A harp within my maple tree;
And Maestro Wind from each compels
An equal harmony;—

At morning a sonata clear,
A symphony superb at noon;
And with the soft descent of eve
A pure and pensive tune.

What need have I in crowded towns
To seek for grand orchestral scores,
When daily through my casement drift
These airs of out-of-doors!

WOODLAND LORE

DEARER than the wisdom of the ages
Is the lore wherein I would be seer;
O ye flowers, unfold your fragrant pages!
And, ye druid trees, speak morning-clear!

Many a time have I sought out the dimmest
Woodland heart-ways, consecrate and lone,
Where the spectral birch-wand rises slimmest,
And the rill assumes its tenderest tone.

Many a tide, sere-vestitured or vernal,
I the fern-fringed, loamy paths have trod
Questingly, and harked the sempiternal
Whispers of the brethren of the sod.

Yet have gained, despite my wander-gleaning,
But the alluring husk and not the core;
I who long to probe each hidden meaning,
I who yearn to learn all woodland lore.

Dearer than the secrets of the sages
Is the wisdom wherein I'd be seer;
So, ye flowers, unfold your fragrant pages!
And, ye druid trees, speak morning-clear!

IN AUTUMNTIDE

THE apple seeds are black at core;
The linden leaves, like fairy ore,
Shed the effulgence of their gold,
Paving the pathways green before.

More plaintive grows the thrush's pipe;
The quince's cheek is yellow ripe;
And the smooth pallor of the pear
Reveals, like dawn, a crimson stripe.

The minstrel wind behind the hill
Above its strings is never still;
Autumn through all the brooding land
Works the rich wonder of its will.

As in a necromancer's glass,
We watch the radiant pageant pass,
Wood waving banner back to wood
Across the severing seas of grass.

Forgetful what the hours presage,
We feel that we have plucked a page
From the untroubled Book of Dream,—
A leaf from out the Golden Age!

WANDERER'S SONG

THERE will be, when I come home, through the
hill-gap in the west,
The friendly smile of the sun on the fields that I
love best;
The red-topped clover here, and the white-whorled
daisy there,
And the bloom of the wilding briar that attars the
upland air;
There will be bird-mirth sweet — (mellower none
may know!) —
The flute of the hermit-thrush, the call of the vireo;
Pleasant gossip of leaves, and from the dawn to
the gloam
The lyric laughter of brooks there will be when
I come home.

There will be, when I come home, the kindliness of
the earth —
Ah, how I love it all, bounteous breadth and girth!
The very sod will say,— tendrils, fiber, and root,—
“ Here is our foster-child, he of the wandering foot.
Welcome! welcome!” And, lo! I shall pause at a
gate ajar
That the leaning lilacs shade, where the honey-
suckles are;
I shall see the open door — O farer over the foam,
The ease of this hunger of heart there will be when
I come home!

THE RUIN OF THE YEAR

BEHIND the hills the wind is like a hound
That whines and whimpers at his master's
door

Against him barred; there is a solemn sound
Where murmured mirth and melody before
Amid the treetops; music mounts no more
Down shady lanes that part the meadow land;
Above, the reaches of the sky are spanned
By swirling vapors ominous and drear;
Veiled are the hyaline heavens blue and bland;
Around us lies the ruin of the year!

Within the girdle of the garden ground,—
That fragrant Indies,—frost has filched the ore
The summer spread so royally around;
Gold of the marigold; the princely store
Of radiant roses lavish with their lore
Of sweet endearment; the slim lily band,
Chaliced of snow and amber, that expand
What time the sun is a benignant sphere,—
All these have bowed before death's dark demand;
Around us lies the ruin of the year!

Thick are the orchard leaves on moss and mound;

The Hesperidian fruit, of juicy core,

Is harvested or stilled; in icy swound

The river that complaineth to the shore

Will soon be bound in fetters firm and frore;

Like tepees tall and tenantless now stand

The stooks of corn that once waved pennons
grand

Ere 'neath the noon was husked the ruddy ear,

And young Love's lips fond hearts to ardor
fanned;

Around us lies the ruin of the year!

Masters, the spring awaits, with kindling brand,

To quicken life where life to-day is banned,—

To wake to bud and bloom the sad and sere;

This faith have we albeit on every hand

Around us lies the ruin of the year!

AUTUMN ANEMONES

BLITHE and brave
In the wind the anemones wave,
As gracile as water soft-rippled,
All dappled and dimpled;
As tender as modest maid-laughter
With smiles stealing after.
To and fro, to and fro,
Like the low throb of music they go;
There's the rhythmical sway in their motion
Of undulant ocean;
They harbor the pearl and the fawn
And the rose-flush of dawn.
My heart dances with them, as light
As the lift of their petals, more fleet
Than the beat
Of the feet
Of the deer,
Though they lead to the winter — and night —
Down the slope of the Year!

AN AUTUMN CRICKET

IN the warm hush of the autumnal night
I list one lonely cricket sound its clear
Persistent music, telling that the year
Has passed the summer zenith of delight.
And though I know that soon in gypsy flight
The birds will wing, and all the hills grow drear,
Yet doth my heart keep constant hold on cheer,
Hearkening this tiny minstrel-hermit.

Then keep thy fine-keyed instrument in tune,
O small musician, till the last leaf falls,
And the last blossom shrivels with the rime,
That I may stray through Autumn's ruined halls,
With golden memories for a buoy and boon,
Indifferent to the onward tread of Time!

THE WINTER SEA

L ANDWARD the breakers roll and run,
The gray-white ospreys near and flee,
Beneath the long slant winter sun
Beside the winter sea.

With chilly gleam the shingle shines;
The sand with icy umber glows;
Back from the beach the stunted pines
Stand somber in the snows.

The horizon shows a steely glint,—
A line by pickets white patrolled;
The empty zenith holds the hint
Of cruelty and cold.

The north-wind clarions; 'tis a dirge,
A requiem, a threnody,
Keyed to the sad sound of the surge
Beside the winter sea.

FROM THE BOOK OF LOVE



THE MASTERS

FIRST Duty bade me rise,
He of the imperious eyes,
And strive to gain some goal of high emprise;
He held within his hand
The scepter of command;
I read upon his brow small kindness,
But rather, in the interlacing lines,
Stern struggle and interminable stress;
His voice betrayed no soothing or caress,
But iron urgency like that plunging surge
Which breaks on the antipodal confines
Of earth, where reef and water meet and merge.
Straightway I roused and went,
Not with the calm elation of content,
But with resolve in clutch
Wherewith I joined the grapple, mastering much,
Yet when the task was done
I was as one
Who sits and broods upon the drooping sun.

Then flushed Ambition came
And touched me with his moving mandate-flame,
Kindling within my breast
No temperate zest,
But the upmounting fire
Of an unquenchable desire.

I felt a sudden ichor in me leap
That banished sleep,
And made the longest day's meridian
Seem but the briefest span.
I that had been, in intimate wise, aware
Of myriad forms of beauty round me strewn,—
The virginal vasts of air,
The tiniest blossom underneath the noon,—
Held by this merciless thrall,
Forgot them all.
And after hours of infinite endeavor,
Grasping the fruit to find it ash at core,
I was as one who wandereth forever
A hapless waif upon a barren shore.

Last Love before me stood
In radiant masterhood,
And hasted me upon his ardent quest;
Lo, at his swift behest,
As though with pinions fleet my feet were shod!
Where'er I trod
I was companioned as with spheric singing,
Rapt period upon rapt period
In rhythm ecstatic swinging.
Yea, although skies of wrath
Menaced above my path,
And my spent breath
Sheer to the gates of Death

Led me, unweaned of will,
Hale Exultation was my comrade still!
And when my space of service-time was ended,—
Love's glorious employ,—
I was henceforth as one who is attended
By the fond presence of some living joy.

BERNARD OF VENTADORN

BRAVE was Bernard of Ventadorn
As any knight in Christendie;
Albeit he was lowly born,
No fear of aughtsoe'er had he.
Straight in his pointed shoon he stood
As a young birch tree in the wood.
Within his eyes the sun and shade
Did meet and mingle wondrously,
While round about his winsome mouth
Fleet little lights of laughter played,
Like butterflies about a flower
Upon a lattice looking south
From some old dreamy garden bower.

Blithe was Bernard of Ventadorn
As is the spirit of the spring
When April quickens everything
From root of reed to tip of tree;
As is the miracle of morn,
Its freshness, its virility.
And, sooth, what could he do but sing,
He to whom God had given for dower
Song, and its soul-uplifting power!
What could he do but sing of all
Of nature's marvelment and mirth —

The vocal rapture of the earth,
The subtle, perfumed bliss thereof;
'And when love caught his heart in thrall
What could he do but sing of love!

Bold was Bernard of Ventadorn!
Did he not dare to lift his eyes
Up to the blush-rose face of her
Whose name went ringing to the skies
When knights from booth and pennoned tent
Rode gaily to the tournament? —
She who had silenced with a scorn
As bitter to the taste as myrrh
The lips of princelings. Aye, and more
Than this he dared! He held her mute
Wit, the low passion of his lute,
The while he told, in words as low,
Of love and all its deathless lore,
Its poignancy of joy and woe.

Glad was Bernard of Ventadorn!
Yea, borne unto the crest of bliss
By the rapt guerdon of her kiss!
E'en the inexorable thorn
Of banishment left him not lorn.
Parting and pain he rose above,
Knowing the crown of perfect love,
Knowing love's sempiternal flower,

And, knowing it, he sang thereof
Till life's last fading twilight hour.
Ah, lovers, ye who tread to-day
The rose-and-myrtle-bordered way,
If ye may feel a love like his,
Then have ye glimpsed below a ray
Of paradisal ecstasies!

THE LADY BLANCHIFLORE

THE lovely Lady Blanchiflore
Had scores of lovers fain and fond;
They flocked to bow her feet before
From Tarascon to Trebizond,
And many another outland place,
Beseeching of her grace.
They told her tales of all their store,—
The lovely Lady Blanchiflore,—
They told her tales of all their love,
The truth and tenderness thereof;
And yet, day following creeping day,
She said them “nay.”

Then roused her wrathful sire and swore,
“By all the saints, but she shall wed,
The lovely Lady Blanchiflore;
No longer shall she bring disgrace
Through the cold fairness of her face
Upon the towers of Blanchiflore
With all their girth and goodlihead!”
She looked within his eyes and smiled
As doth a child.

There dwelt a jongleur in that court,
And a right proper man was he,
The ballad-singer Broiefort;

And since 'twas but a small degree
Of land and gold he held in fee
He nursed his passion silently,
Albeit his eyes spake, and her eyes
(Deep eyes had Lady Blanchiflore)
Had answered him entreating wise.
Pride stood between them evermore;
But now! — but now! — her bower door
She closed, the Lady Blanchiflore;
A little space her lips were dumb;
Then, with a swift resolve, she cried,
“I'll slay the grisly giant Pride,
An *he* but come!”

The morrow morn they led her in
(Her maidens) garbèd gloriously,
Up to a dais by the wall
Of the high-vaulted banquet hall;
Then did the hoary seneschal
Proclaim, while clarions made din
Without, the Lady Blanchiflore
Would that day choose her heart's own knight
From those who passed before her sight,
For thus her sire in anger swore
(Yea, by the blessèd Trinity!)
That it should be.

They came, proud prince and paladin,
Duke, earl and baron, and the sun,
Through the tall windows pouring in,
A braver scene ne'er shone upon.
No sign made she the while her sire
From rigid marble flamed to fire,
Plucked at his beard, clutched at his sword,
Cursed her by turns, by turns deplored.
"And ye will not,—" at last he roared,—
"Stay!" spake she, with beseeching voice,
('Twas oil on raging waters poured!)
"Music might move me to my choice!"

"Music! God's rood! bring Broiefort!"
At sight of whom—"Sing, songbird, sing!
Thou art a bard of good report;
If thou canst thaw yon frozen thing,
Ask whatsoe'er thou wilt of me
Within my whole wide empery!"
The jongleur took his place before
The lovely Lady Blanchiflore;
A breathing space their glances met;
He touched a string, he clasped a fret,
And then he sang until in thrall
Were all in that vast banquet hall,
Yet the enamored worshiper
Sang but to her.

He ceased, and lo! a rippling gush
Of acclamation stormed the hush!
The rose and lily in her face,—
The lovely Lady Blanchiflore,—
Commingled for a little space,
Then ruled the rose as ne'er before.
Down from the dais o'er the floor
She sped (where now was giant Pride?)
And halted by the minstrel's side.
Her sire, he mouthed a mighty oath,—
“By Christ, His wounds!”—while sudden glee
Stirred the old rafters ringingly;
“’Tis thus the wind blows, then!” he quoth.
“I am twice sworn and pledged, I see.
Seek out the priest, where'er he be!
If there's aught more to say — what more?”

“Naught!”—blushed the Lady Blanchiflore.

THE BOOK OF DREAM

I READ in the untroubled Book of Dream
Of beatific things,
Lovely imaginings,
The splendid pomps and pageants of old kings,—
Gleam upon golden gleam!
Each glamoured line
To my enraptured vision
Under unclouded arches sapphirine
Made revelation and interpretation,
(Ah, but they seemed divine!)
Of sights that swam elusive yet elysian.
From rune to silver rune rippled the theme
Of the charmed Book of Dream
Until it touched on love, and on your name
Girt as with morning flame.
There was I fain to dwell,
Brooding above each lyric syllable;
But nay — eclipse!
What broke the spell,
Darkened the beam,
Closed the sweet Book of Dream?
Your laughter, and swift after
Your kiss upon my lips!

A SAILOR'S SONG

WE kissed good-by in the gloaming
Ere the moon crept up the sky;

“When, love, will you be homing?”

She cried, with a teary eye;

“When will you cease from roaming

The breast of the barren sea,

And come to another breast for rest,—

To the longing heart o’ me?”

Then I said to her, low and slow,—

“O it’s ever the lad must go,

And it’s ever the lass must stay,

And that is the tale of the world-old woe

Till the trump of the judgment-day!”

Still I hear her voice enthralling,

And I see her standing there,

With the night’s deep shadows falling

On the dawn-break of her hair.

And ever her calling, calling,

Floats over the southern sea,—

“Come back to my aching breast with rest

For the longing heart o’ me!”

But I cry to her, low and slow,—

“O it’s ever the lad must go,

And it’s ever the lass must stay,

And that is the tale of the world-old woe

Till the trump of the judgment-day!”

SYLVIA IN THE SPRINGTIME

VOICE of the youth of the year,
Wren song and thrush song and cuckoo note
clear!

Melody's core, the articulate soul of the Spring,—
Oh, to hear Sylvia sing!

Flower of the youth of the year,
Bell of the hyacinth, daffodil-spear!
Day dream of beauty and veriest vision of grace,—
Oh, to see Sylvia's face!

DECLINING SUMMER

RELUCTANTLY the summer goes;
The crimson radiance of the rose
Is ashen in the garden-close.

There is a pleading plaintiveness
In the long hill-wind's low caress,
Heart-moving and yet passionless.

The noons are heavy with the heat,
And still, save for the thin-drawn beat
Of the cicada, shrilly-sweet.

Faintly the groves begin to grieve,
And grows more mournful eve by eve
The music-web the thrushes weave.

And Love, erewhile in vernal guise,
Adown the land, in pensive wise,
Now wanders with averted eyes.

SONG

I KNOW that life is sweet
From morn till night,
With Love's unflagging feet
To lead aright.

I know that life is fair
From dusk till dawn,
With Love's protecting care
To lean upon.

I know that life is dear
Beyond belief,
With Love to share the tear
Of joy or grief.

THE WARDEN

JUNE'S blossom-garden
Hath the red rose for warden,—
Sweet Love's inquisitor.
"Ere ye may enter in," said the Red Rose,
"Ye must swear fealty,
And not alone to me,
But likewise bind
Body and soul and mind,
Although it be not for thy heart's repose,
To Love whom I am sign and signet for!"
I came, and, nothing loth,
Took ready oath,
Hence wear I the Red Rose,
(Divinest flower that blows!)
And walk June's blossom-garden, glad to be
Bounden forevermore to Love,— and thee!

THE LOVE-LETTER

YOU ask for a love-letter, sweet, my sweet,
You who are one with all the pulse and beat,
The lure and flowerful loveliness, of Spring,
Its sunlight and its laughter, and the ring
Of low and liquid music. In my heart
Are singing words that flutter and that start
Toward trembling utterance at the thought of you;
Yet ere I voice them — every one as true
As stars are to the midnight with no cloud —
They join and jostle in so close a crowd
That, haply, when you hear them you will say,
“He but half loves me, else in clearer way
Would he the height and depth of love disclose.”
You would not ask the rose to limn the rose,
The sunset to describe its varied beam;
Then why the heart to picture its one dream
Ineffable? Yet, since you ask it, I
Must bid my heart, as best it may, comply!

You ask for a love-letter, love, my love;
Ah, well, I know it should be woven of
Moonlight and melody; gold rays and chords
Such as breathe softly over shaded swards
When twilight steals across the face of day,
About the midmost of enamored May.
And there should be within it fused and caught

All delicacy and fragrances of thought
Such as about you linger evermore.
There should be rapt and radiant metaphor,—
How you are like the wind-flower in your grace;
How sunshine plays at frolic o'er your face
With shadowy pensiveness; how your sweet eyes
Mirror the depths of summer-morning skies.

You ask for a love-letter. Ah, my own,
For all you miss let my intent atone,—
My high intent that still must fall below
What I would win to so that you might know
The scope of adoration, and the whole
Love-wealth of worship dwelling in my soul.

LOVE'S VAGRANT

NORTH and south and east and west
I have roamed a weary while,
But have found no restful bourn
Like the garden of thy smile.

North and south and east and west
I have strayed in errant wise,
But have seen no guiding gleam
Like the lovelight of thine eyes.

North and south and east and west
I have watched the day's eclipse,
But have won no precious meed
Like the guerdon of thy lips.

North and south and east and west
Vagrant still I roam and roam,
Hearkening through the lonely night
For thy voice to call me home.

A SUMMER SONG

A RUBY droops the raspberry;
The plum grows rounder on the tree;
The green nut swells within the burr;
The quince's cheek begins to fur;
'Tis summer still, my Sylvia,
Belovèd, let us cling to her!

Alas, she will not long delay!
The old, irremeable way
Opes even now, wheredown her feet
Will glide in shimmering retreat;
Yet is she ours a little while,
O let us cherish her, my sweet!

Yea, let us lose no moment of
The honey-hearted hours we love!
Aye, let us list each dulcet tone,
Breathe every orient perfume blown
From the rich attar of her heart! —
Make summer's very soul our own!

So shall we gain intrepitude
'Gainst winter's poignancy of mood;
Store sweets against the barren bowers,
And song against the silent hours!
And, guerdoned thus, contented wait
The spring's processional of flowers!

THE WANE O' THE MOON

DO you know the wane o' the moon?
I' faith, it is then
That the shadows march out of the glen
Like the marching of men
To an eery, dreary tune;
And the hounds howl,
And there quavers the hoot of the owl;
And the pines sigh,
As a shudder of wind goes by;
And the ghosts creep
From the vasts of the dark and the deep;
And the brook grieves,
And the leaves!

Do you know the wane o' the moon?
Then the night grows chill,
And mystery works its will
From the height of the hill
To the darkling depth of the dune.
Then dreams wait
For the gap of the Ivory Gate;
And when it opes,
Oh, the jostling of joys and of hopes!
Then there cometh to me
A rapture of visionry,—
A dream without blemish or blur
Of her — of her!

ELUSION

CLEAVAGE of sea and sky,
Ever elusive line,
 Though I follow it far,
 Far as the Ultimate Isles,
Never it seems more nigh,—
 Shifting shadow and shine,—
 Dim as a distant star
 That beckons and beguiles.

Dawn-dream of my heart,
Dusk-dream of my soul,
 Though I follow thee long
 Into the night's deep shades,
Never attained thou art,
Never I gain the goal;
 Thou art like a song
 That ever and ever evades.

A LOVER'S SONG

I FEEL for you such tenderness
As the still twilight skies express,
What time the vernal vesper star,
Love's radiant beacon, flowers afar,
And there is scarce a gleam to see
Of all the sunset's pageantry.

I feel for you such tenderness
As the low-breathing winds express,
When, with faint smiles of pearl and fawn,
Begins the wonder of the dawn
That grows and grows until, behold,—
The morning's miracle of gold!

I feel for you such tenderness
As soft bird-melodies express,
When halcyon-heavened noontide throws
Its thrall about the garden-close,
Where roses, white and crimson, vie
In fair and fragrant rivalry.

I feel for you such tenderness,—
Ah, love, how can weak words express,
Or sight, or sound, or anything,
The whole year round from spring to spring,
Each sad or singing season through,
The tenderness I feel for you?

MY DREAMS

ALL night in dreams with thee I go
About the glamoured land;
All night Love's radiant presence know,—
The kiss, the clasp of hand.

But with the white in-steal of dawn
The rapture doth escape;
The wraith that was no wraith is gone,
A sweet, elusive shape.

Away, O barren of delight,
Day, with thine empty gleams!
Return, divine enchantress, night,
And bring me back my dreams!

MY SPIRIT SOMETIMES GOES

MY spirit sometimes goes
Up and down with the wind;
And I scent the stinging arctic snows,
And all the attars of Ind.

I know the wild thyme bloom,
And Araby's laden airs;
But best I love the faint perfume
Of the violets Sylvia wears.

Delicate as they are,
Sentient with sorcery,
Yet are they flowery fathoms far
Less marvel sweet than she!

AN AUTUMN IDYL

SWEETHEART, do you recall — I know you do! —

That autumn noontide when athwart the blue
And daffodilian gold of heaven no blur
Of vapor floated, and a silvery chirr
Of choiring crickets made a clear accord
With our wood-straying footsteps? On the sward,
Vermeil and bronze and amber, lay the leaves.
How we plashed through them till, as wind the
sheaves,

We rustled them to music! Asters still
Were amethystine underneath the hill,
And a belated dandelion's sheen
Was like an ingot dotted in the green.
A lagging psyche looped above, and then
Zigzagged before us, and a lonely wren
Fluted from out the shade-depth. Variant ways.
The dim paths pierced the forest. We at gaze
Stood for a smiling moment ere we chose.
The rondure of your cheek was like the rose
Of mid-most June in some hedge-girdled close,
And like twin firstling violets your eyes
Pledged love with mine in most confiding wise.

Through oaken aisles and beechen coppices
We footed upward, while a whispering breeze
Companioned us beguilingly, with hints

Of pungent attars and of spicy mints,
And murmurings such as stir among the palms,
Set 'mid Bermudan and Bahaman calms,
What time the south breathes lutingly. Below,
At length we saw druidic row on row
And group on group of ancient hemlocks lift
Their massy boles, and where a rent or rift
Gave chance the sun flung in a streamer bold,
And freaked the girdling gloom with crystal gold.

Where leaped the light alluringly across
A brackened dip anigh a mound of moss
We stayed our steps and spread our forest fare.
How winsomely the amber strands of hair
Crinkled about your forehead! How your lips'
Ripe crimson threw in delicate eclipse
The pigeon-berries on the vine anear!
And then you spoke. Ah, what delight more dear
Than the unconscious radiance of your smile?
Our world that day was as a little isle
Set in the vasts of ocean, where no care
Comes ever, and the circumambient air
Is always hyacinthine. What was said
That we hold hallowed. But if converse led
After awhile from one belovèd theme,
As sure as seeks the magnet sea the stream,
Backward we drifted. Then the pause that came
Was as an ecstasy no words can name.

How the hours fled! Ah, pitilessly fleet!
And yet, and yet, unutterably sweet,
Till warning shadows round about us drew.
Sweetheart, do you recall? I know you do!

LOVE IN NOVEMBER

LOVE, whose loveliness is one
With the sky and earth and sun,
Through the umber-colored land
Let us wander hand in hand
One last time, while nature's mood
Yet reveals beatitude!

Still in the deep aster's dye
Linger glintings of your eye;
Still the drooping barberry shows
How your lips out-burn the rose;
Still the golden-rod doth bear
Ore half rivaling your hair;
And the drifting milkweed down
Moves above the carpet brown
That the leaves in quiet strow
No more graceful than you go!

So, though spring be in your wiles,
Summer in your radiant smiles,
Transient autumn claims you, too,
Oh, most tender and most true!
And this morning clear and sharp,
With the old wind at his harp,
How like you it is, with all
Of its freshness prodigal,
As devoid of any stain
As the white November rain!

Through the umber-colored land
Let us wander hand in hand,
Love, whose loveliness is one
With the sky and earth and sun!

IN A SNOW STORM

WATCHING the snowflakes whisked and
whirled

In ceaseless to and fro,
About the boundaries of the world
She lets her white thoughts go.

And one of those white thoughts of hers
To me comes drifting down
As I sit brooding 'mong the firs
Above this gray old town.

Into my heart that waif of grace
Sinks, nestling like a dove;
Ah, what are all the bounds of space
If thought be winged by love!

OUT OF THE ORIENT

AT THE DESERT'S MARGE

I CAN still recall, though the lapse is long
Since that spectral hour of even-song,
How the sun from the desert sky-line made
The pyramids cast a wedge of shade
Toward the tawny river, and how the moon,
Over the minarets peering soon,
Flung the segment of shadow back,
Long and peaked and purple-black,
While the Sphinx, inscrutable, brooded by,
And the gaunt bats gathered momentarily,
Swooping and circling here and there,
Like evil dreams, in the haunted air;
And a great flamingo, winged in flight,
A giant rose in the gloaming light.

I still can hear from far aloof,
Drifting out from a wattled roof
And a blistered clay wall bare and mean,
The cheerless chant of the fellaheen,—
A medley of shrilly barbarous bars
Jangling and jostling up to the stars.

I still can catch, divinely blent,
The clove and citron and jasmine scent
From the distant gardens and orchards blown
Out to the marge of the desert zone;

And still can feel about me cast
The clutching spell of the veiled and vast
And never-fathomèd wide sand sea,—
Its ancient magic and mystery.

Here might the flower of wonder ope,—
The mystical lotus-bloom of Hope,—
Showing a calyx where, opal-wise,
Glisten the dewes of Paradise.
Here might the dreams that the Prophet knew,—
Marvel and miracle,— come true;
The genii-guarded gates of Doom
Rise from their infinite depths of gloom;
Heaven descend, and its portals swing
Back with ethereal cadencing,
And a voice of more than mortal breath
Whisper the secret of life and death.

LEBANON

IMMEMORIAL cedar groves;
Valleys where the shepherd roves;
Peaks of purple; cinnabar
Slopes, and fields where poppies are,
Each a little mimic sun,
And at night the matchless star
Leaning over Lebanon!

Vast horizons; shattered shrines;
Terraces that verdant vines,
Arbor linking arbor, drape,—
Where the sleek skins of the grape
Yield the ichor of the sun;
Taste, and who would fain escape
Out of golden Lebanon?

Far above, its crest aglow,
Hermon filleted with snow;
Far below, the Tyrian sea,
A great turquoise, dreamily
Turning topaz in the sun;
Soul and sense you hold in fee,
O alluring Lebanon!

To have seen you, evermore
Means to yearningly deplore
Life where paler glories fret
With remembrance and regret;
 Ah, to linger where the sun,—
Allah's shield exalted set,—
 Shines o'er lovely Lebanon!

BALLAD OF ACHMED PASHA

*He thought him wise,—Achmed Pasha,—
And he merrily laughed —“ ha! ha! ha! ha! ”*

ACHMED PASHA was a doughty man,
The ruler of every class and clan
Where sparkling Barada rippled and ran,—
Barada, called by the Greeks of old
Chrysorrhoas, the stream of gold.
And he swore one night on the steps that led
To the tomb of Saladin — valiant dead! —
“ By the Prophet’s beard,” was the oath he made,
“ Ere the closing day of the Ramadan
Shall the cursèd Christian dogs be flayed! ”

Then through the streets from gate to gate
Crept, like a venomous snake, the word;
And when the ears of the rabble heard,
There was sound of the sharpening scimitar
Under the sun and under the star;
Arab, Turkoman, Druse and Kurd,
How they looked alert, and laughed elate
A hungry laugh,—“ *ha! ha;* ”—
O a wily man was Achmed Pasha!

The citron bloom, like the foam of the sea,
Tossed in the south wind snowily,
And he whispered, sunk in his deep divan,

“ This very night shall the flaying be! ”
While through a myriad tones and tints,—
Prismy glammers and rainbow glints,—
Without the fount in the courtyard ran.

From alley dim and from portal black,
From sinuous lane and from *cul-de-sac*,
Unmasked Murder stole, and the night,
As far as Lebanon’s purple height,
Heard the tumult that grew and grew
As the frenzied Moslems sacked and slew.
And when the sanguine torch of the dawn
Out of the east o’er the desert shone,
Damascus streets showed a deeper dye
Than that which gleamed in the morning sky;
And down from his casement-sill —“ *ha! ha!*
The dogs are flayed! ” laughed Achmed Pasha.

Then over the crest of Lebanon,
And the sapphire waves of the inland main,
Did an awful rumor rise and run
Of thousands, aye, upon thousands slain
To the lilt of a laugh. Did he dream (*ha! ha!*)
Of what he had roused, Achmed Pasha?
Ye may cuff the cur, ye may scorn and spurn,
But there comes a day when the dog will turn!

So there gathered a fleet that into the east
Sailed and sailed till the Syrian line
Of serried mountain peaks increased,
The palm up-climbing to meet the pine.
Then rank upon rank of shimmering steel
Swept the passes of Lebanon,
And down on the city dazed with sun
And slaughter the vengeful legion bore,
Nor paused in their onward swing and wheel
Till they grounded arms at the palace door
Where the Pasha cowered and shivered. Aha,
What a sorry sight was Achmed Pasha!

They reared them a gallows stanch and high
Beneath the cope of the Syrian sky;
And they haled him forth from his soft divan,
This wise (or was he a foolish) man!
And that he might have some scope for glee
They gathered a little company
Of his boon companions,—two or three;
And then, at a sign,—“ *ha! ha! ha! ha!* ”
They made an end of Achmed Pasha.

The tale has a moral, I'd fain attest,—
A saying as fair as the goodliest,—
That the man who laughs the last laughs best.

AN ORIENTAL SUNRISE

OUT of the desert the sun
Leaps, and the night is done;
Forth from the almond close
A song aspires, and the rose
Raises its radiant head,
While the prisms dew are shed
From the slim papyrus reeds
Where the singing water speeds.
Each sand-grain seems a speck
Of gold, and the snowy neck
Of the dove into silver gleams
Where the slender minaret dreams
Toward the vault, of a sudden dyed
With a sapphire glorified.
Hark, there's a stir in the khans!
And the tented caravans,—
Crouching camels and men,—
Are smitten to life again!
Toward the holy Kaaba now
Do the prayer-lipped Faithful bow,
Lifting their orisons;
Then a rumor rises and runs,—
Presage of din and jars,—
Through all of the long bazaars.
Jasmined lattices ope
To the golden wings of Hope;

The shadows throng no more,
For the amber lights have play;
And forth from his unbarred door
Love looks out on the day.

IN GADARA

DO you recall, sweet, how the spring
Came up the glade of Gadara,
With bourgeoning and blossoming
As in the gardens of the Shah,—
How morning from her gold-bright wing
Flushed height and depth in Gadara?

How all the poppy beacons flared,
And every rathe anemone;
How all the lovely lupins shared
The heaven's turquoise clarity,—
And blush-fair oleanders dared
Their banners toss,— a rosy sea?

And, sweet, do you remember, too,
The bird voice in the carob bough,—
Some magic minstrel hid from view,
Vow lifting after lyric vow?—
A troubadour who knew the clue
To ope love's heart-gate,— when and how?

Blithe, very blithe, the world seemed then,—
(O golden day in Gadara!)
The sky that leaned above the glen
So like your eyes that wooed me; ah,
Would we might live it o'er again,
That day of days in Gadara!

DAY LILIES

YOUR delicate perfume
In the twilight-shadowed room
Takes me back to an hour
In the land of the lotus flower,
With the lotus moon at bloom.

From a lone papyrus isle
In the gloam of the middle Nile
A reed-flute's slender strain,
Like a haunting heart refrain,
Faltered and swelled the while.

The desert stretched away,
A symphony in gray,
From the marge of the ancient stream
Where the dark genii of dream
Dwell for aye and a day.

Then a little wind there came
Wrought of the sun's clear flame
And the night's cool breath, and bore
A waft from an unknown shore
Of a sweetness without name.

Elusive as a sigh,
As the soul's ecstatic cry
 At the tremulous touch of love,
 It hovered about, above,
Then passed like a phantom by.

Passed ; but it comes again
Over the murk of the main,
 Back through the waste of years,
 The joy glints and the tears,
The passion and the pain.

Trifles,— how oft they start
The gates of the past apart,—
 Just a hint of perfume
 In the twilight-shadowed room
Stirring the chords of the heart!

A DESERT NIGHT

LET us stray a little, you and I,
Under the vast immensity
That is dome to Allah's mosque, the sky!

The myraid stars seem to sway and swing
Like cressets, ring upon radiant ring,
Now glowing and now vanishing.

Silence girdles us, save for the bark
Of jackals haunting the outer dark
Where a Bedouin's camp-fire shows its spark.

Yonder sleep in the shielding khan
That shelters our way-worn caravan,—
Horse and camel and woman and man.

They are happy with trance and dream,
And we with waking, and that one theme
That lovers will love till the sun's last gleam.

Azrael and Israfel,
All the genii of heaven and hell,
What are they when love's tale's to tell?

Naught! — for the world-old night-wind saith
Out of the void, with its lute-like breath
Love is lord over Time and Death!

THE KHAN

THERE is a ruined khan by Gennesar,
The sapphire-bosomed lake of Galilee,
Wherein aforetime many a company
Found rest and food the while they journeyed far.
Upon it now look Syrian sun and star,
And in its roofless rooms and courtyard see
Only the jackal prowling stealthily
Where briars and vines in noisome meshes are.

Some hearts there are that harbored high desires
(Goodly the company that met therein,—
Yearning for truth that evermore aspires,
The burning hope, the faith that dares to win)
That have been choked by vice's vines and briars
Amidst which crept the slinking jackal, Sin!

BY HASBAN'S MARGE

THERE is a lime by Hasban's marge
Ancient of days and lordly large,
And when within the Syrian sky
The bright sun burns like Allah's targe,
It's O beneath the boughs to lie,
Unheeding how fleet time foots by!

Thus lay I at the prime of noon;
The mountain breezes were aswoon,
Aswoon the lyrics of the tree,—
Its leafy laughter low of tune;
And in the red anemone
Hushed was the burden of the bee.

And one soft stirred the zither strings
Whose voice was like the Jordan springs,
Whose cheeks revealed the sunset glow
't'hat shows upon the rose that flings
Its petals to the winds that blow
At twilight-tide o'er Jericho.

She sang of love, and in her eyes,
Lo, its eternal-tender dyes!
She sang, and in her trancing tone,
Lo, all love's deepest ecstasies
Borne adown almond alleys lone
In some far paradisal zone!

There is a lime by Hasban; fain
Am I beneath its boughs again
 To dream the dream that maid and man
Dreamed to love's rapturous refrain
 When through the veins youth's ardors ran
 That golden noontide Syrian!

BY BARADA

BY Barada the bloom is on the bough,—
Almond, pomegranate, citron, nectarine,
Soft rose and snow amid the emerald sheen;
And when the moon-barque shows its silver prow
Faint in the east, the bulbul lifts its vow
O'er all the lovely leafage, and the green
Outreach of mead to where the gaunt cliffs lean,—
Grim Lebanon, with the ice upon its brow.

By Barada there is a ruined shrine
Sacred to Love, whereto, meseems, the bird
Offers its music, word on golden word;—
Sweet, though the shrine be shattered by the
shore,
Love's flame will shine, a beacon-light divine,
Triumphant and unquenched forevermore!

FLAMINGOES

O'ER the undulant emerald reach of rushes,
Where the waters of old Nilus pour,
Tinted as with rosy sunrise flushes,
Silent wing they toward the Libyan shore.

Types they are of mystery and wonder,
As all else within this hoary land,—
Pyramid and pylon rent asunder,
And the tawny, ever-shifting sand.

Radiant, remote and sense-evading,
They are like a dream o'er which we joyed,
Flashing on the vision and then fading
In the golden-blue Egyptian void.

THE ZITHER PLAYER

I STRAYED at sunset through Jerusalem,
And, as I wandered, a declining ray
Lingered upon a golden hyssop spray
Until it shimmered like a wondrous gem.
Reaching to pluck the blossom from its stem,
I was held spell-bound by the zither play
Of one beyond the crannied barrier gray
Whereof this flower was the sole anadem.

'Twas but a plaintive minor, yet compressed
Within the strains there throbbed the soul of
grief,
A touch intangible that told of tears;
It was as though the spirit found relief
Through music, pouring from an anguished breast
The sorrow of innumerable years.

HASSAN AND HASSOUN

S AID Hassan to Hassoun:

“ ’Twere a boon
If this love that enfolds us as fire,
This dream of delight and desire,
That is torture at midnight and noon,
Should lapse, should forever be laid
In sepulture, a shadowless shade,
Like a lifeless and lusterless moon,”
Said Hassan to Hassoun.

Said Hassoun to Hassan:

“ You would ban
All our days and our ways with a gloom
Like the outermost regions of Doom!
We should dwell in one long Ramadan,
A fast with no feasting for aye,
And beauty and bloom plucked away,
And only a desert to scan,”
Said Hassoun to Hassan.

Said Hassan to Hassoun:

“ ’Tis a tune
That tricks us, this love, that allures,
Till a frenzy engrips us no cures
May allay, for all bird-voices croon,
And the winds and the waves alike frame
One lyrically maddening name,

A very device of Mahoun,"
Said Hassan to Hassoun.

Said Hassoun to Hassan:

" 'Tis a plan
That Allah has shaped to uplift
From the silt and the shard and the drift
The spirit we christen as 'man;'
Through it do our eyes first behold
What the word of the Prophet foretold,—
Paradise,—for 'twas there love began,"
Said Hassoun to Hassan.

Thus Hassan and Hassoun! —

Like a rune
You may hear them run on and run on,
Blithe Youth and Old Age that is wan,
Disputing from midnight till noon.
While each speaks, so solemn, his part,
What is love but the same in the heart,
Outlasting, an infinite span,
Both Hassoun and Hassan!

A DRAGOMAN

(Egypt)

I STILL can see him, lean and languid-eyed;
 Beneath his fez his clear cut features dun
 With the swart touch of the Egyptian sun;
A trifle stooped, yet with a hint of pride;
I still can hear his soft voice like the tide
 Of Nile at nightfall when the stars have won
 Their immemorial places, and begun
Their march across the desert, waste and wide.

I still can feel about him the strange spell
 That dominates his land, a kindredship
 With all inscrutable and ancient things,
And fancy, if he would, that he might tell
 The secrets of the Sphinx's sealèd lip
 And of the pyramids and mummied kings.

KHALID ALI'S PRAYER

*In Lebanon, beneath the cedar shade,
Amid the fragments of a shattered shrine,
For his soul's ease young Khalid Ali prayed
To her whom men aforetime held divine.*

O THOU that art my boon and bane,
At dawn and at the daylight's wane,
Look down upon thy worshiper
With pity for his pain!

A radiant, unplucked rose I know,
Fairer than that of Jericho,
Than any attared blossom where
The Pharpar's waters flow;

Yea, than the rarest-petaled bloom
Of Araby's oasis-loom;
Than any crimson bud that decks
The fanes of old Fayûm.

I have a tiny garden-space,—
Meseems it is an empty place;
Ah, how my heart yearns there to see
This rose's peerless face!

Grant me the guerdon of this sight,
O lovely Lady of Delight,
And thine the myrtle-wreaths shall be,
And every ancient rite!

Allah will pardon me, for his
The rose's fragrant molding is;
'Twas he who shaped her eyes to hold
A dream of ecstasies;

'Twas he who wrought from foam and fire
Her lips,—a vision of desire! —
Work thou this wonder, goddess, lest
Thy devotee expire!

*In Lebanon, beneath the cedar shade,
Amid the fragments of a shattered shrine,
Thus, for his soul's ease, Khalid Ali prayed
To her whom men aforetime held divine.*

THE MERCHANT

(Damascus)

HIS eyes are like twin placid pools, by night
O'er-shadowed, yet with glints of starlight
there;

His voice is winning as the evening air,
Wooing the rose in gardens of delight;
His smile is like a ray flashed on the sight
In some grim place that suddenly seems fair;
His thin hands move among the fabrics rare
As deftly as a woman's, and as light.

He shows you scarfs and shawls from far Cashmere,
And rugs of Kermanshah with velvet pile
And sheen of satin shimmering in the sun;
And should you dare to designate them "dear,"
What splendid indignation! Such the wile
Whereby his aim (likewise your gold) is won!

THE MEADS OF BESSIMA

*Once again to see them, ah,
Matchless meads of Bessima!*

BY fleet waters glancing golden,
Girdled as with dream they lie,
Where, by stainless skies beholden,
They are stainless as the sky.

For while night, by Allah's guiding,
Sows the blue with shimmering flowers,
Here the day, through his confiding,
Buildeth radiant blossom bowers.

Out of all the tints of morning,—
Sunrise arras,—are they made;
And they have for their adorning
Arabesques of shine and shade.

Spicy asphodelian attars
O'er them hover, and the breeze
A divine nepenthe scatters
From the poppy-chalices.

Here would I a House of Pleasure
Rear, like fabled Kubla Khan;
Love should be my chiefest treasure,—
Love beyond the ken of man.

At my doorway, on his zither
Should the gay cicada play;
And the bee should bear me thither
His full bass for virelay.

Wafted through the open lattice,
There should falter, there should float,
All the prisoned passion that is
Compassed in the bulbul's note.

I should know,— fond vision this is! —
Biding, Rose of Love, with you,
All the Prophet's promised blisses
At the bourn of Dreams-Come-True!



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